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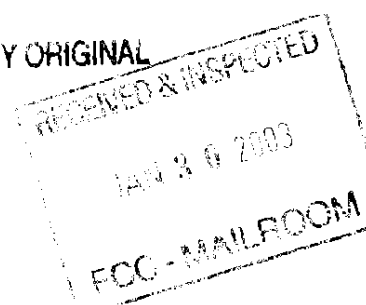
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ASSOCIATED  
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January 22, 2003

The Honorable Gordon H. Smith  
U.S. Senate  
404 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**SUBJECT: WC Docket #03-11**

Dear Senator Smith:

Associated Oregon Industries (AOI) is pleased to provide these comments in support of Qwest Communications' application to provide long distance service to the more than three million homes and businesses in Oregon.

Founded in 1895, AOI is a business organization representing 20,000 companies that employ more than 325,000 employees in Oregon. A strong economy and the availability of competitive telecommunications services for businesses and residents are top priorities for our organization. For that reason, we urge you to join us in supporting Qwest's pursuit to bring more competition and more telecommunications services to Oregonians.

Oregon businesses value choice and they want simplicity when purchasing telecommunications services. When Qwest is able to offer long distance services, businesses in Oregon will have the opportunity to purchase all of their telecommunications services from one provider. More importantly, if Qwest is able to offer the complete package of services, it's been proven that other companies will follow suit. Businesses will benefit from having a choice in providers that can fulfill all of their telecommunications needs. The additional competition brought to the long distance marketplace by Qwest would ultimately result in lower prices, better service and more choices for businesses.

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Oregon's current economic conditions have had a significant impact on our businesses and certainly their employees. Every effort must be made to pursue new opportunities for investment in this state. Qwest has been investing heavily in their networks in Oregon and is bringing advanced telecommunications services to every region of the state. These improvements, in concert with the addition of long distance services to their current offerings, will enable Oregon to attract new businesses as well **as** expand and retain the ones we now have.

AOI is committed to strengthening and promoting businesses in Oregon and we believe that Qwest's ability to offer long distance service will contribute to the economic health of the state. We are looking forward to the day when all businesses – large and small – can truly benefit from the promise of competition in the full range of telecommunications services. We urge you to support Qwest's application to the FCC that will make this a reality in Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard M. Butrick". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "R" and a cursive "M".

Richard M. Butrick  
President

c:     The Honorable Ron Wyden  
          The Honorable David Wu  
          The Honorable Greg Walden  
          The Honorable Earl Blumenauer  
          The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
          The Honorable Darlene Hooley  
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